

Message Text

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43

ACTION AID-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 IGA-02 PM-09 DODE-00 CIAE-00

INR-09 NSAE-00 RSC-01 HEW-08 RSR-01 IO-12 /088 W

----- 041635

R 281015 Z MAR 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3506

C O N F I D E N T I A L REYKJAVIK 0337

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS EAID IC

SUBJECT: VOLCANO EMERGENCY ASSISTANCE: PIPES AND PUMPS

FOL MSG FM COMICEDEFOR SENT ACTION CINCLANT INFO REYKJAVIK

MAR 23 RPTD TO YOU.

QUOTE:

C O N F I D E N T I A L

REQUEST FOR INSTRUCTIONS

A. AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK 141700 Z MAR 73

B. AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK 151850 Z MAR 73 (PASEP)

C. AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK 191331 Z MAR 73 (PASEP)

D. AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK 221915 Z MAR 73

1. ORIGINATOR HAS BEEN INFORMED THAT FINANCIAL AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED BETWEEN ICELAND AND THE U. S. ON THE PROVISION OF PIPES, PUMPS, ETC., TO OPPOSE THE LAVA FLOWS ON HEIMAEY. REFS A-3 PERTAIN. IT IS TO BE EXPECTED THAT C-141 AIRLIFT WILL ARRIVE NAVAL STATION KEFLAVIK SHORTLY. THEREAFTER, THE MAIN BURDEN OF TRANSHIPMENT TO HEIMAEY AND ASSEMBLY OF PUMPING SYSTEM WILL REST WITH THE ICELANDIC AUTHORITIES.

2. THROUGHOUT THE DEBATE OVER FINANCIAL TERMS, THE VOLCANO HAS CONTINUED ACTIVE. DURING THE NIGHT OF 22-23 MARCH, A RAPID LAVA FLOW BREACHED DEFENSIVE AND COLLANT BARRIERS AND PENETRATED
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DEEPLY INTO THE TOWN OF VESTMANNAEYAR, IMMINENTLY THREATENING DESTRUCTION OF THE POWER PLANT WHICH IS THE PRIME BASIS FOR UTILITIES IMPORTANT TO THE DEFENSE OF THE TOWN. THIS NEW LAVA FLOW ALSO THREATENS THE INNER HARBOR ITSELF. THE BEHAVIOR OF THE VOLCANO IS, BY AND LARGE, IN LINE WITH FORECASTS AT THE TIME THE REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL PUMPING CAPABILITY WAS MADE, THAT ONLY APPROXIMATELY A WEEK THEN REMAINED FOR EFFORTS TO RES-TRAIN THE LAVA ON THE FRONT THEN EXISTING; THAT BEHAVIOR IS ALSO CONSISTENT WITH THE TIME SCALE INDICATED IN REF B. AS A RE-SULT OF THE NEW FLOW, IT WILL BE NECESSARY TO REVISE THE PIPE LINE SYSTEM EXTENSIVELY, RE- LAY EXISTING PIPE, AND REVISE THE PLAN TO DEPLOY THE NEW PIPE ARRIVING BY C-141. RE- ROUTING BY ICELAND OF EXISTING PIPE LINES, INCLUDING TWO NEW 8" PLASTIC PIPE LINES TO BE CHARGED WHEN THE AIRLIFT PUMPS ARRIVE, IS ALREADY WELL ALONG ON AN EMERGENCY BASIS.

3. IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE DELAY IN AUGMENTING THE PIPING SYS-TEM HAS BEEN EXPENSIVE AND PROSPECTS FOR ARRESTING THE LAVA ARE NOW MUCH POORER THAN HERETOFORE. IT IS ALSO CLEAR THAT WHEN THE AIRLIFT ARRIVES AT NAVSTA KEFLAVIK, SPEED OF TRANSPORT TO HEIMAey AND SPEED OF ASSEMBLY OF THE PIPE SYSTEM WILL BE OF THE GREATEST IMPORTANCE; IN RESPECT TO THE FORMER FACTOR, C-130 AIRLIFT PERMITTING AIR LANDING THE NEW EQUIPMENT ON HEIMAey AS RECOMMENDED BY TELEPHONE TO WASHINGTON PLANNERS WOULD HAVE BEEN ADVISABLE.

4. IN VIEW OF PRESSING TIME FACTORS, IT MAY BE ANTICIPATED THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE WILL BE ASKED TO ASSIST WITH TRANSPORT OF ARRIVING EQUIPMENT AND LOADING ABOARD SHIP AT KEFLAVIK; WITH THE MANUFACTURE OF PUMPING MANIFOLDS, AND WITH ASSEMBLY OF OTHER COMPONENTS ON THE MAINLAND. IT IS ALSO PROBABLE THAT THE DEFENSE FORCE WILL BE REQUESTED TO ASSIST ON HEIMAey WITH TE-CHNICAL PERSONNEL AND WITH SUPPLEMENTARY LABOR TO HELP LAY PIPE LINES. THE U. S. AMBASSADOR ADVISES THAT ANY ACTIVITY BY THE DEFENSE FORCE IN THIS AREA WOULD BE ON OWN INITIATIVE IN ABSENCE OF FUNDS FOR INTER- DEPARTMENTAL REIMBURSEMENT. EVERY EFFORT WILL, OF COURSE, BE MADE BY COMICEDEFOR TO MINIMIZE ICELANDIC REQUESTS FOR DEFENSE FORCE ASSISTANCE OF THIS NATURE; HOWEVER, IN VIEW OF THE TERRIBLE SITUATION IN VESTMANNAEYAR, IT IS NOT REALISTIC TO EXPECT SUCH REQUESTS CAN BE TURNED OFF IN ADVANCE.

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5. THERE IS DEFINITELY A CONNECTION BETWEEN ICELANDIC PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENTAL SENTIMENT TOWARD RETENTION OF THE DEFENSE FORCE AND THE ASSISTANCE THE DEFENSE FORCE RENDERS THE NATION IN TIME OF CRISIS. IT IS THEREFORE CONSIDERED PRUDENT AND STRONGLY IN THE U. S. NATIONAL INTEREST FOR THE DEFENSE FORCE TO BE OF ASSISTANCE IN THE INTENSIFYING EFFORTS ON LAVA CONTROL. IT IS SUGGESTED THAT COMICEDEFOR BE AUTHORIZED TO ASSIST WITHIN THE LOCAL RESOURCES OF THE COMMAND, MINIMIZING EXPENDITURES AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, BUT RECOGNIZING THAT SOME DEGREE OF EVENTUAL REIMBURSEMENT FROM HIGHER MILITARY HEADQUARTERS CANNOT BE RULED OUT.

6. REQUEST FIRM DELINEATION OF AUTHORITY IN THIS AREA IN ADVANCE OF AIRLIFT. GDS-79 UNQUOTE.
IRVING

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*** Current Classification *** CONFIDENTIAL

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